

Message Text

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EXDIS MILITARY ADDEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652 :GDS

TAGS: MARR, PFOR, PINT, PO, FR, NATO
SUBJECT: FRENCH VIEWS ON AZORES AND PORTUGAL
CINCLANT FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY: FRENCH EMBASSY COUNSELOR REPORTS GOF SKITTISH ON AZORES ISSUE, FEARS IT COULD HELP PCP, WANTS TO STAY IN TOUCH BUT NOT CONCERT WITH U.S. ON AZORES. FRANCE THINKS "MODERATES" STILL HAVE GOOD CHANCE TO WIN IN PORTUGAL. NONETHELESS, GOF HOLDING BACK ON ECONOMIC AID. END SUMMARY.
2. VIEWS OUTLINED BELOW WERE TRANSMITTED BY COUNSELOR MASSET OF FRENCH EMBASSY WASHINGTON DURING ROUTINE VISIT TO EUR/WE.
3. AZORES. ONLY FRENCH PRESENCE IS SMALL EXPENDABLE MISSILE TRACKING FACILITY ON FLORES AND A CONSULAR
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AGENT. CONSEQUENTLY FRANCE CAN ESCAPE INVOLVEMENT IN

AZORES EVENTS IN A WAY THAT THE U.S. WITH ITS LARGE LAJES PRESENCE CANNOT. QUAI D'ORSAY WILL REACT TO AZORES EVENTS IN TERMS OF THEIR IMPACT ON MAINLAND. GOF SEES AZORES AS INTEGRAL PART OF TERRITORY OF AN ALLY, BELIEVES AZORES REBELLION OR DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE NOW WOULD UNDERMINE ANTI-GONCALVES FORCES IN METROPOLE, CONSOLIDATE COMMUNIST INFLUENCE WHICH OTHERWISE IS ON SHAKY GROUND. FRANCE THEREFORE

EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS ON AZORES MATTERS, AVOIDING CONTACT WITH SEPARATISTS (MASSET ADMITTED RECEIVING SOME PRO-INDEPENDENCE LITERATURE MAILED IN U.S.), BELIEVES NO RPT NO CONCERTED NATO OR FRANCE-U.S. POSITION ON ISLANDS IS DESIRABLE NO', BUT WANTS TO REMAIN IN CLOSE COMMUNICATION WITH U.S. RE AZORES DEVELOPMENTS.

4. MAINLAND PORTUGAL. GOF A LITTLE SURPRISED BY RECENT VIOLENCE, BUT BELIEVES REAL CIVIL WAR UNLIKELY. POLITICAL TURMOIL WILL BE PROLONGED, BUT "MODERATES" HAVE A GOOD CHANCE OF WINNING IN THE LONG RUN, GIVEN DISENCHANTMENT OF BULK OF ARMED FORCES WITH PM GONCALVES AND HIS FAR-LEFT COHORTS, PLUS MASS PUBLIC HOSTILITY TOWARD GONCALVES. MASSET SPECULATED THAT BASICALLY PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES AGREES WITH MELO ANTUNES' POSITION THAT PORTUGAL'S FUTURE MUST LIE WITH WESTERN EUROPE. MASSET SUGGESTED PRESIDENT IS SIMPLY BIDDING TIME UNTIL GONCALVES' FAILURES ARE SO OBVIOUS LATTER WILL FALL OF OWN WEIGHT. (DEPTOFF POINTED OUT COSTA GOMES OFTEN SAYS RIGHT THINGS BUT HIS TRACK RECORD IS ABYSMAL.) FINALLY, GOF THINKS AID TO PORTUGAL NOW WOULD ONLY RELIEVE GRAVE ECONOMIC PRESSURES ON PRESENT PORTUGUESE LEADERSHIP, THEREBY PLAYING INTO HANDS OF GONCALVES AND COMMUNIST PARTY. CONSEQUENTLY, FRANCE WILL CONTINUE TO HOLD BACK ON AID. KISSINGER

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